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SUBJECT: THAILAND APEC 2006 PRIORITIES

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¶1. On February 9, Econoff spoke with Ms. Morakot Srisawsdi, of the Department of International Economic Affairs in the Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ms. Wichada Phabanjerdkit, APEC Section Chief in the Department of Trade Negotiations regarding Thai priorities for APEC 2006. The RTG plan of action for APEC is still under draft and relevant Ministries have been instructed to submit their comments on the APEC agenda by February 17. As a result, Ms. Morakot and Ms. Wichada were not able to give a definitive list of RTG priorities for 2006, but instead gave a general description of Thailand's continuing APEC activities and likely priorities.

¶2. Ms. Wichada said trade facilitation would likely be the top priority in APEC for the RTG this year, and expected that this priority would be widely shared by other developing nations in APEC. The RTG goal would be a reduction in transaction costs of five percent in 2006, with a further five percent reduction by 2010. Wichada said Thailand also expected to take the lead in APEC on food safety and the mutual recognition arrangement (MRA) for foods and food products, issues of importance to Thailand.

¶3. Human security is another priority, and Ms. Morakot said Thailand would be pushing an initiative on biofuel that was endorsed at APEC 2005, though details were still to be worked out. Pandemic disease, and avian flu in particular, will be a continuing priority for Thailand at the ministers meetings in April in Vietnam.

¶4. Morakot said Thailand was also planning to host two APEC activities in 2006. In June, Thailand will hold a seminar with a focus on development of the sectoral food MRA and food safety. Thailand is also preparing to host the APEC Ministerial on Human Resources Development.

¶5. Post will forward additional information on RTG APEC priorities as their inter-Ministerial process develops.  
BOYCE